

**What are adenoviruses?**

Adenoviruses are common viruses that can cause illness in humans. Most infections with adenovirus result in respiratory illnesses and are not serious.

**Who gets adenovirus infection?**

Anyone can be infected by adenoviruses. Most infections are mild. Serious illness can occur in infants, those with weak immune systems, or those with existing respiratory or cardiac disease. Outbreaks can occur where people are in close quarters.

**How is adenovirus infection spread?**

Adenoviruses spread very easily from one person to another and can also survive for a long time on objects. The virus may be spread through contact with droplets from the nose and throat of an infected person (e.g., during coughing or sneezing) or by touching an object or surface with the viruses on it and then touching the mouth, nose, or eyes before hand washing. Some adenoviruses can spread through an infected person's stool (for example, during diaper changing). Adenoviruses can also spread through the water, such as swimming pools, but this is less common.

**What are the symptoms of adenovirus infection?**

Adenoviruses most often infect the airways – this can appear as a “cold” (e.g., sore throat, sneezing, runny nose, cough, headache, chills), croup, or bronchitis. Some people may also get a fever. Illness usually lasts three to five days, but serious infections can last for weeks. Complications can include ear infections, pneumonia, or meningitis. Some adenoviruses cause other illnesses, such as skin rash, conjunctivitis (pink-eye,) bladder infections, or bowel infections (e.g., diarrhea).

**How soon do symptoms appear?**

For respiratory infections, symptoms may develop 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus. For intestinal tract infections, symptoms may develop 3 to 10 days after exposure to the virus.

**How is adenovirus diagnosed?**

Several laboratory tests are available to diagnose adenovirus, including molecular tests (such as PCR), blood tests, virus isolation (a specimen is taken from the patient and the lab tries to find the virus), and antigen detection (a quick test to detect a germ without growing it or looking for it under a microscope). Doctors usually diagnose adenovirus infection based on the patient's symptoms.

**What is the treatment for adenovirus infection?**

Treatment usually involves measures to relieve the symptoms of illness. Doctors may recommend rest, drinking plenty of fluids, use of over-the-counter medicines to manage fever/pain, and use of a cool-mist humidifier. Ill persons should see a doctor if fever continues for more than a few days,

symptoms worsen, breathing problems occur, or if not enough fluids are being taken. Those with serious illness or weak immune systems may need additional treatment or hospitalization.

## **How can adenovirus be prevented?**

There is no vaccine generally available to prevent adenovirus infection. Good health habits can help prevent adenovirus infection. These include covering the mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing; washing hands often (alcohol-based hand sanitizers may be used if hands are not visibly soiled); avoiding touching the eyes, nose or mouth; staying home from work, school, and errands if sick; and avoiding close contact with people who are sick. Keeping adequate levels of chlorine in swimming pools is important to prevent outbreaks of conjunctivitis caused by adenovirus.

## **How long is a person able to spread the disease?**

Adenovirus infections are most contagious during the first few days of symptoms. It is common for people to continue to be contagious for a longer period of time (sometimes months). Some people can carry the virus in their tonsils, adenoids, and intestines for months or years and not have any symptoms but still be able to spread the virus to others.

## **Does past infection with adenovirus make a person immune?**

People who have been infected with a particular strain of adenovirus may be at least partly immune if they come into contact with it again. Because there are many strains of adenovirus, people who have been infected with one strain can later become infected with a different strain.

## **How can I get more information about adenovirus?**

- If you have concerns about adenovirus, contact your healthcare provider.
- Call your local health department. A directory of local health departments is located at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/local-health-districts/>.
- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://www.cdc.gov/adenovirus/index.html>.

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